

Message Text

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ACTION EB-03

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 15013

LIMDIS

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, GATT, EEC, UK

SUBJECT: BRITISH POSITIONS ON TRADE ISSUES IN ART. 113
COMMITTEE MEETING

REF: (A) EC BRUSSELS 9076, (B) LONDON 11925

1. ON SEPT. 22 WE HAD A CHAT WITH TOM SHARP, RECENTLY
BRITISH COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR IN WASHINGTON, WHO IS NOW
RESPONSIBLE FOR MTN QUESTIONS IN THE DEPT. OF TRADE.
SHARP WILL BE ATTENDING THE ART. 113 COMMITTEE MEETING
OF SEPT. 24, REPLACING ROBIN GRAY, WHO IS SERIOUSLY ILL.

2. SHARP SAYS HE IS INSTRUCTED, IN THE DISCUSSION OF
SAFEGUARDS, TO URGE STRONGLY THAT THE EC ADOPT A
POSITION ENDORSING THE "SELECTIVE" USE OF SAFEGUARDS.
THIS BRITISH STAND IS CONSISTENT WITH A DEVELOPING
WHITEHALL CONSENSUS THAT THE PRICE OF MAINTAINING EXIST-
ING LIBERAL TRADING RELATIONS WITH WESTERN EUROPE AND
NORTH AMERICA MAY BE DISCRIMINATORY RESTRICTIONS ON
CERTAIN IMPORTS FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD, WITH JAPAN
AND CERTAIN EFFICIENT LDC PRODUCERS OF INDUSTRIAL
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PRODUCTS THE LIKELIEST TO BE AFFECTED. SHARP NOTED THAT

THE US SAFEGUARD PROPOSAL PRESENTED IN THE MTNS BEFORE THE SUMMER BREAK WAS SILENT ON SELECTIVITY; HOWEVER, HE SAID, US LAW WOULD PERMIT SUCH AN APPROACH.

3. THE IDEA OF A MARCH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE TNC IS TO COME UP AT LUNCH ON FRIDAY, ACCORDING TO SHARP. HE IS INSTRUCTED TO EXPRESS MILD OPPOSITION TO SUCH A MEETING, ON THE BASIS THAT THERE'S NO DEADLOCK TO BE RESOLVED (SIC) AND THEREFORE NO NEED TO COLLECT TOGETHER MINISTERS; MINISTERS SHOULD BE CONVOKED WHEN THEIR PRESENCE IS REALLY NECESSARY. SHARP IS SUPPOSED TO ARGUE THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD SIMPLY "GET ON WITH IT."

4. ANOTHER MIDDLE-LEVEL DEPT. OF TRADE OFFICIAL WILL BE ACCOMPANYING SHARP TO HANDLE THE TEXTILE ISSUE. SHARP'S UNDERSTANDING IS THAT HE IS TO TAKE THE LINE THAT THE MFA SHOULD BE RENEWED BUT WITH REVISIONS THAT WOULD MAKE IT LESS LIBERAL. SHARP'S ONLY SPECIFIC IN THIS CONNECTION WAS TO NOTE THE "UNFAIRNESS" OF A UNIVERSAL GROWTH PERCENTAGE TO A COUNTRY WHICH ALREADY HAD A HIGH MARKET PENETRATION RATIO. (ON THIS SUBJECT SEE ALSO REF. B.)

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